

be resolved. I think it is a dangerous practice to simply say that we will not do it, to describe the situation as throwing our people into the meat grinder.

Mr. President, when America lacks the ability to stand up for human rights, to stand up against abuse of men, women, and children such as we have seen in Bosnia and such as we saw 50 years ago in Europe, when for a long period of time, America was silent while the slaughter went on—Mr. President, we have troops in Korea. They are there to protect democracy. They are at risk. There is some danger that something could go awry and people could get killed or injured, and we do not want that to happen. I want us to have a careful debate about Bosnia. But when America withdraws, as we see what is taking place in Europe, in the old Yugoslavia, where women are routinely raped, where young men are routinely killed, and we stand by doing nothing about it, shame on the free world, shame on America.

I am not talking about troops. A long time ago I felt we should have men supporting the Bosnians by lifting the arms embargo because they were taking a terrible, terrible beating at the hands of a brutal invader. So, Mr. President, I think that as we talk here about the President, about programs, about ridicule, about lack of respect—

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted 2 more minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

WORKING TOGETHER

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, as we discuss where we have to go, the very difficult times in America—we have problems within our society in terms of crime and in terms of race relations, in terms of building our economy for the next century—I can understand people sticking up for their party because there is a separation of beliefs in many cases—in most, certainly. But to stand here to heap abuse on the President of the United States and try to discredit the office by even the terminology that is used to describe the President, I think that it does us no good, that it, in fact, continues to reduce the civility that used to exist here.

I am here 12 years now—almost 13 years. If nothing else, we had our disagreements, but the tone was far more civil. There was far more interaction between the parties. And now what has happened is this has become a political staging ground.

I hope, Mr. President, that we can do away with some of that, work on the problems, work on the budget, on reducing the budget deficit, sticking behind our country; if a decision is made by the Commander in Chief that makes sense in our review, we support it and not simply use it for another opportunity for a political score.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the Senate will now turn to consideration of S. 1372, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1372) to amend the Social Security Act to increase the earnings limit, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I note the presence of the distinguished Senator from New York. If it is agreeable to him, I would like to proceed with the bill. If he is not ready, we could go into a quorum call.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I most assuredly am prepared to go to the bill and look forward to the Senator's remarks.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from New York. Before I go into my remarks, I want to thank the Senator from New York for his steadfast support over many, many years of the principle of lifting the earnings test. The Senator from New York was kind enough, in a hearing that we had earlier this year, to point out in his own unique, descriptive style how unfair this is for working seniors. I am appreciative of his understanding of the obstacles that were posed to lifting the earnings test but, at the same time, his support of the concept of doing so.

Mr. President, after 8 years of being involved in this issue of raising the Social Security earnings limit, we have arrived at the moment when seniors will no longer be punished by their Government for being required, often by circumstances beyond their control, to work to support themselves and their families.

We begin debate today on long overdue legislation, the purpose of which is best summarized in the legislation's title, the "Senior Citizens' Freedom To Work Act." Mr. President, this bill is not everything that I wanted it to be. I wanted it to lift the earnings test completely. The scoring of that by CBO would have been prohibitive.

What this bill really does is increase, over a 7-year period, the present earnings cap minimum from today's level of \$11,280 per year to \$30,000 per year. It is over a 7-year period. I will discuss later the factors that motivated us to make it that modest, but primarily it had to do with scoring.

I remind my colleagues that in President Clinton's very important statement during his Presidential campaign book entitled "Putting People First," the President stated, and a direct excerpt reads:

Lift the Social Security earnings test limitation so that older Americans are able to help rebuild our economy and create a better future for all.

That, I think, describes it as well as can be.

Let me also point out, and I will say this time and time again, as I have in the past, this earnings test limitation does not affect wealthy seniors who have trust funds, stocks, pension funds, any other outside income that is not earned income. The only people that are affected by this Depression-era dinosaur are those seniors that go out and work and work because, generally, they have to because of either unforeseen circumstances or the fact that they just simply do not have enough money from their Social Security.

Mr. President, I do not know of a more onerous and unfair tax than that. It would probably astound people to know that if a senior went out to work, that as soon as he or she exceeded \$11,000 per year, for every \$3 that person earned over that limit, they lose \$1 in Social Security benefits. Due to this cap on earnings, the senior citizens, many of whom are existing on low incomes, are effectively burdened with a 33.3-percent tax on their earned income. If you put in Federal, State, and other Social Security taxes, it then mounts up to somewhere between 55 and 65 percent, placing these seniors who are low-income people in the highest tax bracket in America.

I do not want to spend a lot of time going through the history of this, because I have been fighting it, as I said, since 1987. There has always been a reason for not doing it because, one, it was brought up on an appropriations bill, there was no offset, it could not be scored by the CBO, et cetera.

I have always, up until now at least, resisted this business of accepting CBO scoring because it is clear to anyone that if we lift this earnings test, more seniors are going to go to work and more seniors will pay more taxes. So the static scoring idea has never been revealed as being more fallacious than in this type of scoring that goes on.

On September 10, 1992, we had a vote in the Senate on a motion to waive a Budget Act point of order which required a three-fifths vote. There were 51 votes in favor and 42 against.

I want to quote some of those who opposed the motion to waive the Budget Act:

Do not misunderstand us. The idea to raise the earnings test is not a bad idea. We just believe we should pay for raising the limits with offsets or a tax increase.

Another argument was:

We would support Senator MCCAIN's amendment if it were not being offered to an appropriations bill. The Senator is right, we should stop using static models and analysis for economic forecasting. We agree that this amendment would bring additional revenue to the Treasury. Further, we agree with all of the other arguments made by those who favor this bill and who would support this bill if it were freestanding or an amendment to a bill that was not an appropriations bill. Unfortunately, we must urge our colleagues to oppose the motion to waive the Budget Act since it is being offered to an appropriations bill.